

so has been challenged by hospitals and doctors demanding higher payments. Companies managing Medicare benefits would face similar pressures from drugstores.

"The National Association of Chain Drugstores recently sent a bulletin to its members opposing the Republicans' Medicare drug proposal. Crystal S. Wright, vice president of the association, said, 'This could be an economic disaster for community pharmacies. Benefit managers are likely to get even more leverage than they currently have to reduce pharmacy reimbursement.'"

So the drugstores are saying, we are not going to be able to get adequate reimbursement, so we are going to go out of business. Where is it we expect this Republican plan to work?

The last thing the New York Times article says, "House Republicans said insurers could set different premiums and benefits, so long as the overall value of each drug plan was equivalent to that of the standard coverage suggested by the government. The Republican plan is part of a bill costing \$350 billion over 10 years."

Well, again, I do not understand what my Republican colleagues expect. Experience is that private insurance does not work to provide these kind of drug benefits. The insurance companies say they are not going to sell it. The pharmacies say it will not work. The only reason I can imagine that they are proposing it is they know this is a major issue that is going to face them in the election. They have promised the American public that they are going to provide a prescription drug plan, and so they come up with this sham which they hope to pass through the House, probably on a totally partisan vote, send to the other body, and never hear from it again, but they can say to the voters that they have tried. But they are not trying, they are just putting out something that is a sham. Hopefully as Democrats we will show the sham for what it is and to ask our colleagues to vote for the Democratic alternative which would provide a meaningful guaranteed benefit under Medicare for all seniors.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. KENNEDY of Minnesota).

Members are reminded to refrain from improper references to the Senate.

IMMIGRATION POLICY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2001, the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. TANCREDI) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. TANCREDI. Mr. Speaker, I have often come to the floor of the House to discuss the issue of immigration and

immigration reform. I have also had that opportunity to do so in a variety of different settings over the last several years. I have watched with interest in the way that this debate has evolved, or some may say degenerated.

The fact is that it does seem to me that the debate over immigration reform is entering a new phase, and unfortunately I think not a productive one. Nonetheless, it is a phase in which the opponents of immigration reform have moved from a thoughtful, sometimes thoughtful, I should say, analysis of a major public policy issue to a darker, more sinister and far less intellectually based discussion.

I say that because of an article that was run in the Dallas newspaper, the Dallas Morning News, and I will get to it because it describes an event and some of the activities surrounding an event that I attended in Guanajuato, Mexico, a few weeks ago. The event was an annual meeting of American Congressmen and Mexican parliamentarians and legislators. It is an annual event, and I think this is the 21st or 22nd year of its existence. I was asked to attend this year, I am not sure exactly why, but nonetheless I was asked to attend. I did so, and found it to be a very stimulating and rewarding experience, stimulating because the debate on immigration and immigration reform is one that raises a lot of concerns and a lot of emotions; productive because at the end of the 2 days, 2.5 that we were there, I walked away with a feeling that at least my colleagues from the Congress of the United States and our colleagues in the Mexican Congress were much more understanding of the position that I hold vis-a-vis immigration and immigration reform, and that which is held by a relatively large majority of the people in this country.

I made it a point to explain that my observations with regard to immigration are not borne out of any hostility towards Mexico, any feelings of ill will, and certainly not any feeling about Mexican immigrants themselves. In fact, my feelings about immigration are not in any way, shape or form the result of opinions I have about anyone's ethnicity or nationality. They are irrelevant. I view everyone who comes into this country the same way I view my grandfather and great-grandparents who came to this country at the turn of the century. They are people for the most part seeking a better life. They come to the United States for promises of economic prosperity and political freedom.

□ 2100

These are, of course, laudable goals. And if I were in their position, I have no doubt I would be doing exactly the same thing. I would be looking for ways to come to the United States in order to better my life and the prospects of a good life for my children, grandchildren and future generations.

I blame no immigrant for the problems we have in the United States with

regard to immigration. They are two different things entirely. I am not anti-immigrant. I am certainly concerned about the effects of massive immigration into this country. And it really does not matter the country of origin from which the people coming here emanate. What matters to me most is the numbers. And the fact that massive immigration has an effect on many aspects of our society seems to me to make that particular subject worthy of civil debate.

I think it is hard to suggest that the growing numbers of Americans and/or people living in this country without benefit of citizenship, many of whom live here without benefit of legal status, it is hard to suggest that that growing number of people in this country does not represent some intriguing opportunities and/or problems. Economic problems certainly, in terms of the cost, the infrastructure that needs to be created to support the many millions coming into the United States, the schools, the hospitals, the social services.

The other economic issues deal with jobs. Some suggest that everyone coming to the United States is taking jobs that no one here will take. Others, and certainly I side with those who suggest that that needs far deeper review than what has been given it, and that there are many thousands, perhaps hundreds of thousands, even perhaps millions of Americans who are today looking for a job that someone else holds and that someone else may very well not even be a citizen of the United States, or even here legally for that matter.

Then, of course, there is the national security issue. It is undeniably true that the most recent terrorist activities that have plagued the United States have been perpetrated by people who have come into the country as visitors on visas. Some of them overstayed their visas. Some of them lied about what they were going to do here and could have been and should have been deported. Others, one in particular, actually violated the status of his visa by leaving the country, I believe that was Mohamed Atta, and could have been kept from returning to the United States, or he could have been deported once he came back after violating that visa status. Nonetheless, all were here and all did their deeds.

As we look at the future, there is a great possibility, even probability, that the United States will suffer other similar types of terrorist attacks. And there is a great possibility that these attacks will be perpetrated by people who come to this country from somewhere else, either by sneaking into the country or coming here on some sort of legal status but only for the purpose of doing us harm. And so our ability to control our own borders, limited as they may be because of the length of the borders, because of the fact that we have about 500 million visits a year into the United States, those complicating factors make it more difficult

for us to control our borders but do not in any way, I think, give us the right to ignore the borders as a place where we should be concentrating our efforts in terms of national security. We may not be able to stop everyone who is trying to come into the United States illegally. That is surely true. But it is just as true that we can do so much better than we are presently doing.

Tomorrow we will have a press conference at which we will discuss one aspect of border security that is available immediately to us, and it only needs the signature of the President of the United States to put into effect. But that is for tomorrow.

I wanted to lay out briefly my own position on the issue of immigration and immigration reform, because I will share with you, Mr. Speaker, and actually I am going to quote liberally from two different articles that I think are very important as we enter this next stage of this debate that I mentioned to you. It is apparent to me that the point of view that I represent here this evening with regard to immigration control is gaining in acceptability and gaining in political power because the opposition to it is becoming more frightened, more vitriolic, more bombastic. That is always an indication that we have struck a nerve and that something out there has forced the opponents of immigration reform into this new accusatory mode.

An example of what I am describing is an article, as I mentioned earlier, that appeared in the Dallas Morning News on June 16 which ostensibly is to describe this meeting that I have mentioned in Guanajuato, Mexico. It is also designed to focus on me in particular, my background; my, quote, supporters; the people that I, quote, represent; and paints a rather negative picture, I should say, of all of those things. It certainly presents me as someone who is more intent upon keeping Mexicans out of the United States than I am about general immigration reform.

Remember, the meeting we were having was in Mexico. The discussion we were having was pertinent to Mexican immigration into the United States. Mexican immigration into the United States does in fact represent the largest percentage of immigrants; and, therefore, of course, it is hard to talk about immigration reform without referencing periodically Mexico. But the tone of the article that says, "Colorado Politician on Guard at Mexican Border," that is the heading, would certainly lead one to believe, if you were to accept everything that is written here, that there is some great conspiracy or cabal in the works that I have aligned myself with, as they keep saying here, and I am quoting, unsavory supporters and unsavory characters.

The article said that all of the people in Mexico, all of the Republicans and all of the Democrats plus all the people who were on the other side, the Mexican legislators, were careful to dis-

tance themselves from my views which are widely seen as, quote, anti-Mexican.

It goes on to say, Mr. TANCREDO's message, quote, Mexican immigration is leading to the balkanization of America. It says, he supports a temporary guest worker program for Mexicans. Mr. TANCREDO opposes allowing more Mexicans into the United States on a permanent basis. He even blames Mexican immigration for California's energy crisis. I am called anti-Hispanic throughout this thing. Certainly anti-Mexican. That is quoted a couple of times.

Suffice it to say that I have been on the floor of the House many, many times, spent many, many hours in debate on this issue, or discussion or monologues on this issue as I am doing tonight. I would challenge anyone to review any of the hundreds, for all I know thousands, of pages of testimony that I have given either in front of committees or the transcript from the many hours I have spent on this floor doing exactly what I am doing now, or the literally thousands, maybe hundreds of thousands, of words that have been printed in the media about my position on issues, on this issue in particular, and I challenge anyone to go to anything I have ever said that would lead anybody to believe that I have only one concern about immigration and, that is, Mexico or Mexicans.

As I say, we spend a good deal of time talking about Mexican immigration. It represents the greatest number. But it is never ever, and I have never suggested that our efforts to try and curb immigration be solely directed at Mexico. I have stated here, on I do not know how many occasions, that it is not the ethnicity, it is not the nationality, it is not the country of origin, it is the numbers. It is how many come from a certain place, not necessarily where they come from. And I am just as concerned about the northern border as I am about the southern border. I believe there is, if not more insecurity at the northern border than there is at the southern border, it is certainly equally as disconcerting when we look at the situation that exists on both the northern and southern borders.

I am concerned about our ports of entry on both coasts. I am concerned about the ability of people to come into the United States via air traffic into any city in the United States, into any international airport in the United States, coming from countries all over the world who come here without giving us really a clear indication of who they are, come here without us knowing exactly what it is they are going to do here, come here and overstay their visas which for the most part I think accounts for a huge number of people who are here illegally.

They are not just people who cross the border from Mexico. There are people who came into the United States from a variety of different ways and a variety of different ports of entry,

most of them coming in with visa status, with a legitimate visa status, many of them with bogus visa status, but nonetheless coming that way and then simply overstaying their visa and staying here illegally. I do not know the percentage, but I would suggest to you it is a huge percentage of the nearly 13 million people who are here illegally.

But this article would suggest that everything I say and everything I do is designed to attack Mexico or Mexicans. Why would they say a thing like this? Well, we know why, Mr. Speaker. It is because, of course, if they can cast me in the light of a racist, someone who is anti-Mexican, anti-immigrant in general, then they can marginalize me and hence the things I say.

This article goes on at length to talk about the immigration reform caucus which I formed here, a Member of Congress, one of I do not know how many literally, probably hundreds of caucuses there are here in the Congress, and it is exactly like any other caucus. Members join it voluntarily. We have no outside support. They suggest that we get funding from these nefarious groups and that my campaigns are supported by, quote, what they say are unsavory characters. Quote, his critics say that money comes from unsavory supporters.

Mr. Speaker, "his critics say that money comes from unsavory supporters." Who are my critics? Who are their names? What are their names?

□ 2115

And who are these unsatisfactory supporters? They just use that phrase "unsatisfactory supporters."

Mr. Speaker, the last time I checked, we had something like 7,000 individual contributors who contributed less than \$50 to any of my campaigns, which, by the way, represents the greatest amount of money that I have ever collected in the two campaigns that I have waged to become a Congressman; \$50 or less from thousands of people across the country.

These are the "unsatisfactory characters" to whom they refer? What makes them unsatisfactory? Just because they gave to my campaign, in the eyes of my "critics"? Who are these critics?

Of course, nothing like this would ever hold up in a court of law. You have to name your critics, and you have to name these people who you call unsatisfactory. But in an article that is masquerading as an article and is really an editorial, an opinion by the two authors, Alfredo Corchado and Ricardo Sandoval, this is their editorial opinion they have worked masterfully, I must say, into this "article," an article that is supposed to be an objective analysis of a news event.

What is objective about "his critics say that his money comes from unsatisfactory supporters?" Anybody could state a thing like this, because you do not name anyone here. Who are my critics that say such a thing?

Then they go on to identify someone later, a Ms. Hernandez. She is, let me see here, the head of the Latin American Research Service Industry, a civil rights group in Denver. Now, I do not know who Ms. Hernandez is, and I have never heard of the Latin American Research Service Industry in my life; but they are quoted here, of course, as some sort of expert on things, and she says that my rhetoric is anti-Hispanic as well as just anti-immigrant.

Now, they finally did quote a critic of mine in this place; but, of course, they did not quote anyone who suggests that I am not anti-Hispanic or anti-immigrant, and there are many people, even, believe this or not, in the Hispanic community, people who write us all of the time, people who run organizations even in Denver, organizations that are devoted to helping immigrants in Colorado, who have met with me, who have indicated their support for my position, who recognize that there is nothing in me or what I say that can be taken by a thoughtful person as being anti-Hispanic, anti-Mexican, or even really anti-immigrant.

The article goes on to quote the Southern Poverty Law Center. The Southern Poverty Law Center did a "four-month investigation" which is going to be featured in something they call the intelligence project. I would question that descriptor there of "intelligence." It charged that many in the anti-immigrant network are "increasingly tied to openly white supremacist organizations and are steadily gaining power in Mr. TANCREDO's Immigration Reform Caucus."

Let me restate the nature of a caucus in the House of Representatives. It is made up of Members. Are they saying that Members of our caucus are tied to openly white supremacist organizations? I would like to know who those people are.

I have never actually even met anybody in this body who is tied to an openly white supremacist organization. To tell you the truth, I do not think I have ever met anybody in my life in that category. They are certainly out there, I have no doubt; I just do not know them. I have never come across them. I am lucky in that regard. I have never really had to discuss anything with people like that, at least to the best of my knowledge.

But they are suggesting in this phrase, look at the way that was printed, charged that "many in the anti-immigration network." What are these phrases? Many? Who are they? "Anti-immigration network, increasingly tied to openly white supremacist organizations."

What are these ties? What are these ties that connect us to some white supremacist organization, and how dare anybody say anything like that and do so in a way, again, that is designed rhetorically to poke at those very hot-button emotional issues in America?

A quote here from Martin Potok, the editor of this intelligence report. This

is talking about our caucus Web page. This is the main page of a large caucus, a group of Congressmen directly linked in the front page to hate groups. It goes on: "Tancredo has become an unofficial mouthpiece for some very unsatisfactory characters. His message is eerily similar to theirs."

This is an article. This is not an editorial. This is not some sort of novel in the stage of trying to get it printed or something. This is something that purports itself to be an objective analysis of the issue of immigration, immigration reform, and certainly our own caucus and who I am.

Well, it goes on like that at length, and it relies heavily on the information from this thing, this organization called the Southern Poverty Law Center.

I have noticed in the past that many people have relied on it, they will use this Southern Poverty Law Center headed by a gentleman by the name of Morris Dees, as some sort of credible organization, and that we should somehow pay attention to what this outfit says about who is a hate group and who is not. So, therefore, I looked back at some interesting research that was done into this particular group, organization, the Southern Poverty Law Center, and now I am going to quote heavily from an article that was written a little over a year and a half ago by a gentleman by the name of Ken Silverstein for Harper's Magazine. This was November of 2000, to be specific. It is called "How the Southern Poverty Law Center Profits From Intolerance." He spends a good deal of time focusing in on this Mr. Dees, Morris Dees, who is the head of this organization.

It says here, "Cofounded in 1971 by civil rights lawyer cum-direct marketing millionaire, Morris Dees, a leading critic of 'hate groups' and a man so beatific that he was the subject of a made-for-movie TV, the SPLC spent much of its early years defending prisoners who faced the death penalty and suing to desegregate all white institutions, like Alabama's Highway Patrol."

That was then, this is now. "Today, the SPLC spends most of its time and money on a relentless fund-raising campaign peddling memberships in the Church of Tolerance with all the zeal of a circuit court rider passing the collection plate. He is the Jim and Tammy Faye Bakker of the civil rights movement, renowned anti-death penalty lawyer Millard Farmer says of Dees, his former associate, though I do not mean to malign Jim and Tammy Faye."

The center earned \$44 million last year alone." Remember, this would be 1999, "\$27 million came from fund-raising and \$17 million from stock and other investments. But the organization only spent \$13 million on civil rights programs, making it one of the most profitable charities in the country."

Mr. Speaker, as an aside, we have been hearing lately about many organi-

zations, from the Red Cross to others, that have improperly, or perhaps at least alleged to have improperly, used the funds that people have given them, charitable organizations that spend way too much in overhead, paid salaries, paid too high salaries to their administrators and the like, and really do not do what they should in order to protect the people they are supposed to be on whose behalf they are supposed to be advocating.

But, interestingly, in the general media we have never heard much about this particular organization, the Southern Poverty Law Center; and I suggest to you it is because this organization's focus is primarily defending liberal causes, liberal positions, and to the extent that they are doing even what they say they are doing, or should be doing, they could still be quite a reputable organization. But this outfit is anything but reputable.

Mr. Dees, it goes on to talk about this gentleman, and since they spent so much time in these articles and the law center has evidently chosen to point fingers at me and my associates, I suppose it is only fair that we turn the mirror on them, which I am doing, with the help of this article by Mr. Silverstein.

"Mr. Dees, who made millions hawking by direct mail such humble commodities as birthday cakes, cookbooks, tractor seat cushions and rat poison in exchange for mailing lists containing 700,000 names, including Presidential candidate George McGovern, he is nothing if not a good salesman. So good that in fact in 1998," 2 years before this article came out, "the Direct Marketing Association inducted him into its Hall of Fame. He says 'I learned everything I know about hustling from the Baptist Church.'" This is Mr. Dees's quote.

"In fact Mr. Dees," it goes on to say here, "does not need anyone's financial support anymore. The Southern Poverty Law Center is already the wealthiest civil rights group in America, though the letter-writing campaign, the solicitations campaigns, naturally omit that fact. Other solicitations have been more flagrantly misleading. One pitch sent out in 1995, when the center had more than \$60 million in reserves, informed would-be donors that the 'strain on our current operating budget is the greatest in our 25 year history.'

"Now, back in 1978, when the center had less than \$10 million, Dees promised that his organization would quit fund raising and live off the interest as soon as its endowment hit \$55 million. But as it approached that figure, the Southern Poverty Law Center upped the bar to \$100 million, a sum that one 1989 newsletter promised would allow the center to 'cease the costly and often unreliable task of fund-raising.' Today the Southern Poverty Law Center's Treasury bulges with \$120 million," remember, that is 2 years ago, "and it spends twice as much on fund-raising, \$5.76 million last year, as it

does on legal services for victims of civil rights abuses.

"The American Institute of Philanthropy gives the center one of the worst ratings of any group it monitors, estimating that the SPLC could operate for 4.6 years without making another tax exempt nickel from its investments or raising another tax deductible cent from well-meaning people."

In 1986, this well-respected center, this place that this article refers to in some reverential tone, as if we are supposed to be concerned and listen carefully to the accusations made by this outfit, this center's entire legal staff quit in protest of Mr. Dees's refusal to address issues such as homelessness, voter registration, and affirmative action that they considered far more pertinent to poor minorities, yet far less marketable to affluent benefactors than fighting the KKK, which is like their main thing.

They keep sending out things about the KKK. The KKK is a bad outfit, I am sure of that; and this outfit, the SPLC, keeps resurrecting that ghost. It says here they had 4 million members in the 1920s to about 2,000 today, and as many as 10 percent of them are thought to be FBI informants. So I would not consider the KKK to be the kind of threat it was in 1920, but this outfit still uses them as their poster boy, sort of, to get money.

□ 2130

Because the KKK, everybody says, oh, my God, send this money, or the KKK will rise again. This outfit is a fraud.

The article ends up with this. This is again, quoting back here from the Church of Morris Dees, the article name. Until the early 1960s, Morris Dees sat on the sidelines honing his direct marketing skills and practicing law while the civil rights movement engulfed The South. "Morris and I shared the overriding purpose of making a pile of money," recalls Dees' business partner, a lawyer named Millard Fuller. "we were not particular about how we did it; we just wanted to be independently rich." They were so unparticular, in fact, that in 1961, they defended a man guilty of beating up a journalist covering the Freedom Riders whose legal fees were paid for by the Klan."

"In 1965, Fuller sold out to Dees. Fuller donated his money to charity and later started Habitat for Humanity," a well-respected, this is a personal observation, a well-respected organization as far as I know, and certainly one that deserves the support of all of us who are concerned about homelessness. Dees, with his share of the money, bought a 200-acre estate appointed with tennis courts, a pool, and stables, and then in 1971 founded the Southern Poverty Law Center where his compensation has risen in proportion to fund-raising revenues, from nothing in the early 1970s to \$273,000 last year, again, 1999.

"A National Journal survey of salaries paid to the top officers of advocacy groups shows that Dees earned more in 1998 than nearly all of the 78 listed, tens of thousands more than the heads of such groups as the ACLU, the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, and the Children's Defense Fund. The more money that the SPLC receives, the less that goes to other civil rights organizations, many of which, including the NAACP, have struggled to stay out of bankruptcy. Dees' compensation alone amounts to one-quarter the annual budget of the Atlanta-based Southern Center for Human Rights, which handles several dozen death penalty cases a year. 'You are a fraud and a con man,' the Southern Center's Director Stephen Bright wrote in a 1996 letter to Dees and proceeded to list his many reasons for thinking so, which included, 'Your failure to respond to the most desperate need of the poor and powerless, despite your millions upon millions. Your fund-raising techniques and the fact that you spend so much accomplishing so little and promote yourself so shamelessly.'"

Soon, the SPLC will move into a new six-story headquarters in downtown Montgomery, just across the street from its current headquarters, a building known locally as the Poverty Palace. That is the Southern Poverty Law Center. That is the organization to which we are supposed to pay attention when it comes to determining who in America is to be trusted and who is to be characterized in unsavory terms.

Mr. Dees uses a tactic that has been around for a long time. Perhaps the most familiar, perhaps the most famous individual in recent American history that perfected a tactic of guilt by association, of using that guilt by association to attack his enemies, of using innuendo, half truths, out-of-context quotes, all of the things that we know to be the tactics of unscrupulous individuals, perhaps we all know that Joe McCarthy, a Senator from Minnesota, was and has been characterized as the kind of poster boy for this kind of activity. He made a career out of destroying other people's careers. He was responsible for ending the careers and some say the lives, some people I understand even took their own lives because of the destruction he wrought upon them and their families. I do not know the degree to which Mr. McCarthy's accusations were accurate or not; I know that he is characterized as being a totally unscrupulous individual. But I suggest to my colleagues, Mr. Speaker, that Mr. Dees and this Southern Poverty Law Center together rival Mr. McCarthy in terms of the way they can manipulate, they have attempted to manipulate. And I should say the authors of the article that I mentioned earlier, Mr. Corchado and Mr. Sandoval, the way that they use phrases, the way that they use things like what "critics," unnamed critics say; the way they use heavily loaded,

emotionally loaded language to try and characterize in this case me and anybody else who believes, as I do, about immigration reform as people that do not deserve to be heard. It is McCarthyism. I am glad we have actually coined that term in America, because everybody now knows what one means when they say McCarthyism.

And it is in its most despicable form that we see here the reincarnation of it, in this article and in the work of this organization. Mr. Dees apparently, according to this article, uses it to line his own pocketbook. Others use it because they want to advance themselves politically and/or destroy the reputations of people with whom they disagree. Name-calling, calling people racist as they do in here, suggesting that that is the motivating factor, that is the last refuge of a scoundrel. And someone who has shrunk from the intellectual debate that should occur about this very serious topic, their hope is that we will cease and desist, that we will shrink from them, and shrink from this battle because of the fear that someone will think ill of us, and that someone will believe the scurrilous things that they print. Well, some may, in fact, do that, Mr. Speaker. I recognize that, and I am sorry about that.

I know what motivates me. I know what is in my heart. I know it has nothing to do with race. I know it has everything to do with what I consider to be an enormously complex and challenging public policy issue. I believe it deserves debate in this place that we call the open marketplace of ideas. But if these people had their way, we would be silent. If these people had their way, I would refrain from any references to immigration reform for fear that they will come after me, that they will write nasty things about me, that they will try to destroy my political career or even my own reputation.

Well, I assure my colleagues I will not stop this discussion, I will not stop participating in this discussion. And I challenge all of those who find this an uncomfortable situation and discussion to be in; and I agree with my colleagues, I wish, in fact, we could move on to other topics. I wish we could do that, but we cannot, because this issue is not solved, the problem is not solved. We have not as a country faced up to the problems of immigration on the scale that we presently see it. It will change America, maybe for the good, maybe for ill. But regardless of one's position on this, as I say, I believe it deserves the debate that this kind of a forum offers.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Mr. BECERRA (at the request of Mr. GEPHARDT) for today on account of personal reasons.

Ms. DELAURO (at the request of Mr. GEPHARDT) for today on account of personal business.